FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

14 APRIL 1983

Inter-Arab Affairs

Summit Postponement—Morocco's King Hassan II postponed the convening of the emergency Arab summit from 16-17 April until the beginning of May to allow further consultations among Arab leaders in light of the latest Middle East developments, Rabat radio announced. Meanwhile, PLO official Hani al-Hasan said the PLO "does not object" to the summit's postponement provided that the majority of Arab countries agree and the delay is only for a few days, WAKH reported citing Al-Hasan's remarks to a WAKH correspondent in Rabat. He affirmed that "minimeetings" will be held if necessary before the summit and if they will ensure the summit's success.

'Arafat, PLO Activities—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat said in Stockholm that talks between the PLO and Jordan will continue, Baghdad Voice of PLO radio reported. A PLO spokesman stated that the talks will resume in Rabat and added that 'Arafat had sent PLO envoys to the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchs to help prepare for the talks, the radio noted. According to a subsequent Radio Monte Carlo report, 'Arafat announced that the Executive Committee will meet within the next 24 hours to discuss the recent Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations as well as recent statements by the U.S. President and secretary of state. The radio disclosed that Jordanian officials have threatened "to rupture" relations with the PLO and that the Executive Committee will "dwell on" the Jordanian threat.

Husayn Message—Jordan's King Husayn has sent a message to President Reagan explaining the results of the Jordanian-Palestinian talks and Jordan's attitude toward the U.S. peace initiative, the paper AR-RA'Y reported. The king explained that U.S. nonrecognition of the PLO "hindered" an agreement on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian move, the paper noted.

Lebanon

Tripartite Negotiations—After meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin in Jerusalem, presidential envoy Philip Habib flew to Lebanon where he participated in the 13 April tripartite talks in Khaldah, Jerusalem radio reported. Israeli officials think Habib's participation in the talks indicates that the United States wishes to intensify efforts to reach an agreement, the radio said. According to Jerusalem television, Habib informed Begin that he intends to conclude the negotiations during his current round of talks. Nevertheless, the gap between Israel and Lebanon over Major Sa'd Haddad's future role remains large, with the Lebanese stating that they will at best be prepared to accept Haddad as a liaison officer in southern Lebanon, Jerusalem radio noted in a report on the Khaldah talks. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens subsequently declared in a Jerusalem television interview that Israel does not intend to give up its demand that Haddad be appointed commander of the Lebanese Army brigade in southern Lebanon.

Military, Security Situation—Syrian and Israeli forces in Al-Biqa' valley engaged exchanged artillery fire briefly on 13 April, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon reported. Meanwhile, an IDF soldier was killed and another was wounded during an ambush in the Ash-Shuf area, Jerusalem radio reported citing the IDF spokesman. An Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that in order to prevent ambushes along the coastal road IDF soldiers returning home will henceforth fly back from the newly opened Israeli airbase at Ad-Damur, AFP reported.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

The Iranians have lost 9,832 soldiers killed and several dozen armored and other vehicles destroyed during their latest offensive, according to an Iraqi military spokesman cited by Baghdad radio. An Iranian military communique broadcast by Tehran radio said over 6,400 Iraqis have been killed or wounded in the fighting. Iraqi military commanders refuted Iranian claims that two Iraqi brigades were destroyed in the Maysan sector and said that a "major part" of the three Iranian divisions involved in the offensive have been wiped out, according to INA reports.

In another development Iraqi gunboats and helicopters launched a missile attack against Iran's Ardashir oilfield, setting two oil platforms ablaze, an Iranian communique broadcast by Tehran radio announced. The communique claimed that one Iraqi vessel was destroyed and said the fire on the platforms was soon extinguished. There is "no accurate information" about a new oil slick resulting from the attack, the communique added. An Iraqi communique broadcast by Baghdad radio did not mention any Iraqi attack on Iranian oil wells but reported instead that the Iraqi Navy sank two Iranian vessels attempting to approach the Iraqi coast.

The aim of the Iraqi attacks on the oilfield was to put political pressure on Iran and force it to accept a cease-fire on all fronts, Iranian Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said in an interview carried by Tehran radio. He also reiterated the Iranian objectives in the war: Iranian withdrawal from all Iraqi territory; reparations for war damages; punishment of the aggressor, and the return of homeless Iraqis to Iraq.

Egypt

Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, described his talks with Secretary of State Shultz as "positive and constructive," MENA said. President Husni Mubarak told journalists during his return trip to Cairo from Pakistan that Egypt does not impose Camp David on anyone, but "we expect all parties not to coerce or to ask us to cancel it," according to another MENA report. He declared that Egypt "is not at all in the mood" to risk losing international confidence if it reneges on a commitment which it accepted "through its own free choice."

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia plans to spend 57.7 billion riyals on defense in the coming fiscal year out of total budget allocations of 260 billion riyals, according to a Ministry of Finance and National Economy budget statement carried by SPA. An expected budget deficit of 35 billion riyals will be financed from general reserves, the statement noted. The nonoil gross domestic product grew by over 7 percent in the past fiscal year despite a shortfall of almost 70 billion riyals between actual and planned government revenues caused by the decline in oil exports and production.

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Iran Declines Participation in Geneva Talks

NC131952 Paris AFP in English 1846 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Text] Geneva, April 13 (AFP)—Iran confirmed today that one of its representatives met late yesterday with United Nations special representative Diego Cordovez, who is chairing informal talks here on Afghanistan between Afghan and Pakistani delegations.

The 11 days of talks, which began Monday under the auspices of Mr Cordovez, the special representative of UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, were set up to discuss four points: withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, respect by countries of the region of the principle of noninterference in each other's internal affairs, right of the Afghans to self-determination, and voluntary repartiation of Afghan refugees.

Iran's charge d'affaires here, Mohammed Jafar Mohallati, said he had met Mr Cordovez at the latter's request and repeated Iran's official position that it was not taking part in the talks because the Afghan resistance movements were not represented.

While Mr Cordovez had said only the refugee issue would be discussed at this second series of informal discussions, Mr Mohallati, citing the UN representative, said issues other than the refugee question had been raised at the separate meetings Mr Cordovez had held with the two delegations.

Mr Mohallati said that in his opinion a return of the estimated three million refugees from Pakistan to Afghanistan could only take place after an unconditional withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Karachi: Talks Continue 12 Apr

BK131427 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Text] On the second day of the second round of indirect talks on Afghanistan in Geneva yesterday, the UN secretary general's personal representative, Diego Cordovez, and Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan further examined the contents of the draft document for a comprehensive settlement of the Afghanistan problem. ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN, quoting informed sources, said that the contents of the draft document prepared by Cordovez pertain to consultations Cordovez plans to carry out in the near future to ascertain the wishes of the Afghan refugees about their return to their country and their opinion about the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan and other connected matters. The talks lasted for about 2 hours and 15 minutes.

Asked by a correspondent about how the talks went yesterday as he emerged from the conference room, Cordovez said: so far very good. Later, Cordovez met with the Kabul regime delegation led by its foreign minister, Shah Mohammad Dost. The talks will be resumed today. Cordovez hosted a working dinner in honor of the Pakistani foreign minister last night.

The Foreign Secretary, Niaz A. Naik, briefed the Iranian permanent Representative at the UN European headquarters, Dr Mohallati, on the discussions which took place on the opening day of the second round of the indirect talks. A spokesman for the Pakistan delegation said the delegation will keep the Iranian side abreast of what is going on in the talks. The spokesman said Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan will apprise the Iranian ambassador in Geneva of full details of discussions at the conclusion of the current talks.

Meanwhile, a group of Afghan nationals living in exile in various parts of Europe staged a demonstration in front of the main gate of the (Palace de Mission) where the indirect talks are taking place. They were protesting against the presence of the Karmal administration's delegation at the talks. During the demonstration, which lasted about 2 hours, the mujahidin waved banners and distributed booklets concerning the Afghanistan problem.

Karachi: UN Draft Examined

BK140609 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 14 Apr 83

[Text] The United Nations' draft document for a political solution to the Afghanistan problem was further examined in detail on the 3d day of the second round of the UN-sponsored indirect talks on the issue at Geneva yesterday. The UN secretary general's personal representative on the Afghanistan issue, Diego Cordovez, met with the Pakistani delegation led by Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan yesterday morning while the delegation of the Karmal regime led by Foreign Affairs Minister Shah Mohammad Dost called on the UN secretary general's representative during the afternoon.

According to UN sources, the draft under negotiation contained three basic principles under which the parties concerned may reach an agreement. These include the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, repatriation of Afghan refugees to their homeland, and a guarantee for noninterference. The sources say that in the first 2 days, the Pakistani and Karmal regime delegations discussed in detail the first two elements of the draft while yesterday, besides examining these elements in detail, preliminary exchanges took place on the guarantees for noninterference.

Cordovez met with the Iranian permanent representative, Dr Mohallati, at the UN's European headquarters on Tuesday and apprised him of the details of the indirect talks beginning Monday. Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan hosted a luncheon for Cordovez in Geneva yesterday, during which talks were also held. The luncheon was attended by, among others, William Smyser, UN deputy high commissioner for refugees.

Communiques Issued on Recent Military Operations

Communique No 1,281

LD131757 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Communique No 1,281 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. The justice-seeking combatants of Islam, continuing the first phase of the victorious Wal Fajr operations, repulsed all desperate attempts of the Saddamist warmongers when trying to regain the liberated territories during all yesterday and early this morning. The combatants of Islam thus inflicted more decisive and smashing blows on the Saddamist mercenaries. The powerful defenders of the Islamic Revolution, while maintaining their domination and superiority, are now defending their new positions with full strength and vigilance. All units taking part in this phase of the operations continue mopping up operations in the liberated regions, collecting captured equipment and moving the prisoners behind the battlelines. The heroic pilots of the Air Force and the Airborne Division of the Islamic Republic of Iran are remarkably active in providing secure air cover for the units of the Ground Forces in their operations.

At about midnight last night the brave warriors of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran destroyed one enemy gunboat [navcheh] in the course of a missile attack launched by the Saddamist on the Ardashir oil field, which is in the vicinity of the Norwuz oil field. The enemy began these operations with six gunboats, having air cover, and two helicopters. As a result of the enemy missile attack, two platforms were set ablaze, but the fire was immediately brought under control and was put out at 0055. After the destruction of the enemy gunboat, the rest of the gunboats fled toward the Al-Bakr and Al-Umayyah jetties. At present there is no accurate information available as to whether there is any oil slick following the above-mentioned oil well fire.

Our heroic combatants continue their relentless efforts to crush the enemy on other battlefronts. Yesterday, the fire of our forces on the Abdan and Khorramshahr fronts destroyed six trenches and three observation posts of the aggressors on the other side of the Arvand Rud and damaged two engineering vehicles of the Saddamists. Also a number of Iraqi troops were either killed or wounded in this region.

The resistant city of Abadan yesterday came under enemy long-range artillery fire on many occasions. Three houses and shops were demolished and some areas of the city were set on fire as a result of the enemy shelling.

The Iraqi forces attempted to launch an offensive in the Sumar sector at 1700 yesterday. Our warriors confronted them promptly, repulsed their attack, and inflicted losses on the enemy.

Our patrol groups on other western fronts opened fire on enemy positions, setting fire to and destroying 30 trenches and observation posts of the Saddamist forces andkilling troops deployed in them. The gunfire of our patrol groups also destroyed several enemy vehicles.

May God bestow assistance upon justice seekers and friends of truth.

[Signed] Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Joint Communique No 9

LD131802 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Joint Communique No 9 of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Brave Islamic nation,self-sacrificing and martyr-nurturing Iranian nation, in the continuation of the first stage of the victorious Wal Fajr operations, which started under the command of the Khatam ol-Anbiya Headquarters—may peace be upon him and his descendents—the joint operations center of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, the victorious soldiers of Islam are still busy consolidating the captured positions and are continuing to heroically defend the Islamic homeland.

The defeated forces of the criminal Saddam, to continue their aggression, desperately tried in the past 2 days to launch several counteroffensives but they were faced with the resistance and steadfastness of the lion-hearted heroes of the army of Islam and received other fatal blows. Four tanks of the criminal Ba'thist enemy which went into action in the early hours of this morning backed by an infantry brigade, a mechanized brigade, and several commando battalions, known as Hutti, in the course of the first stage of the Wal Fajr operations were repulsed by the efforts and total resistance of the brave combatants of the army of Islam, consisting of the devotees of revolution guards and the mobilization of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the self-sacrificing personnel of the army of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result, several companies of the aforesaid brigades were completely smashed and the defeated enemy fled, leaving behind more than 28 tanks and personnel carriers which were set on fire and destroyed by the strong combatants of Islam.

In these victorious operations, the combatants of Islam inflicted heavy casualties on the forces of the Zionist Saddam, killing or wounding more than 900 of them and taking others prisoner. As a result, the toll of the aggressive enemy servicemen who have been killed or wounded in the course of this stage of the victorious Wal Fajr operations exceeds 6,400.

In the course of these operations, two helicopters of the aggressive enemy were also shot down by the fire of Islam's antiblasphemous combatants.

Final reports on these operations will be brought to the attention of the Muslim and hero-nurturing people of Iran in subsequent communiques.

We hereby ask the God-seeking nation,who has hitherto carried out their duty to the beloved Islam and the Islamic Revolution

through their unreserved support for the devotees of the army of Islam, to help their combative and self-sacrificing sons by sincere prayers to the Almighty.

[Signed] Central Headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Joint staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Unnumbered Communique

GF140924 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 14 Apr 83

[Unnumbered joint communique of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. The heroic Islamic warriors are marching forward, the monotheist self-sacrificing Armed Forces are marching forward, the self-sacrificing soldiers of the Koran are marching forward in our war of liberation. They are the true sons of Islam and are the heroic defenders of the Islamic Revolution. They are the ardent hope of the millions of pious, brave, heroic, and stable nation. March foward so that with God's blessful assistance and the prophetic command of the dear leader of the Islamic Revolution and its commander in chief, Imam Khomeyni, you can defend the Islamic homeland and continue to repulse the Ba'thist Zionist evil aggressors. By doing so, you will write epic poems in the glorious history of the Islamic nation.

O brave Islamic nation, o sacrificing God-loving nation of Iran, the victorious army of Imam az-Zaman [the expected Imam Mehdi], peace and greetings be upon him, in continuing the proud Wal Wajr operation under the Khatam ol-Anbiya command base, the headquarters of the joint operation of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, in defense of dear Islam and the Islamic Revolution, last night inflicted fatal blows to the forces of the Saddam lackey regime and achieved more victories for the Islamic nation.

In this victorious operation, the self-sacrificing guards, mobilized units of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps,and heroic Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, overran the first and second lines of the criminal enemy's positions in the early hours of the morning, were able to overcome all kinds of obstacles, including minefields and boobytraps, and captured several ammunition depots which were important aid assistance from the imperialistic countries of West and East to the dying Saddam regime. The Islamic warriors also succeeded in capturing important heights in the border area north of Faqih.

The Islamic warriors, in this victorious operation, inflicted fatal blows which resulted in heavy casualties being suffered by the Ba'thist invaders. The 108th Infantry Brigade of the Ba'thist Zionist Iraqi Army was totally crushed and destroyed. Also a tank division of the 51st Armored Battalion and several ammunition depots of the Ba'thist elements were totally destroyed; they burned for hours.

In continuing this liberation operation, two more helicopters of the Ba'thist criminal aggressors were shot down by the artillery of the Islamic warriors. In the past 2 days, a total of 4 enemy helicopters have been shot down. Also many elements of the infidel forces of the Zionist Iraqi regime have been killed.

This victorious operation continues with the brave warriors of Islam maintaining the upperhand.

Your prayers, you the hero-creating nation, will pave the way for the forces of light and belief against the Saddamist mercenaries of darkness and infidelity.

Comprehensive reports on last night's operation will be brought to the attention of the imam and more information will be provided to you, the heroic and ever-alert nation, later on.

[Signed] Central headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

IRNA: Iraqi Buildup Indicates Heavy Damages

LD141145 Tehran IRNA in English 1047 GMT 14 Apr 83

[Text] Khatam ol-Anbiya HQ, west of Iran, April 14, IRNA—The Iraqi regime, after sustaining heavy damages in the first stage of Wal Fajr operations, is now bringing 90 tanks, personnel carriers and heavy vehicles in the operation axis leading to (Chazzabeh) and north of Faqih.

The tanks were seen Wednesday in the area opposite to Hamrin heights moving in an armoured column from eastern part of Wal Fajr theatre towards west, the scene of severe fighting in the past few days.

Military sources believe that this new military build-up of the Iraqi regime is to collect arms and replace the forces it lost with reinforcement to try to retaliate its defeats.

The sources say that this is an indication of the heavy damages and casualties the Iraqi regime is inflicted during this stage of Wal Fajr operations.

Navy Sinking of Iraqi Gunboat Reported

LD141219 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Apr 83

[Text] According to the Central News Unit, one of the warships of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran which engaged in battle six gunboats belonging to the defeated and aggressive Saddamist Armed Forces 2 nights ago in the Ardashir oil field and which succeeded in sinking one of the gunboats of the Iraqi Zionist regime and in forcing the others to flee, this morning successfully docked at the Bushehr naval docks. The brave and valiant personnel of this vessel were enthusiastically welcomed by the martyr-nurturing and self-sacrificing Bushehr nation with resounding slogans: War, war till victory!

It should be noted that at about 2350 on Tuesday, 12 April, the Iraqi gunboats attacked the Ardashir oil field intending to

destroy it. By their criminal and inhuman action these gunboats intended to bring about a spreading of the pollution of the Persian Gulf waters and to make life even more difficult for our Arab brothers and sisters in the Persian Gulf littoral. But, thanks to the alertness of the Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, one Iraqi gunboat was sunk and the remaining Iraqi gunboats fled to the (Al-Bakr) and (Al-Umayyah) ports in Iraq.

Musavi Discusses Offensive, Iraqi Missile Attack

LD131327 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Interview with Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi following Cabinet meeting in Tehran on 13 April—recorded]

[Text] [Question] Could you state what topics were discussed at the Cabinet session today in connection with the war and other matters?

[Answer] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. During this session, Colonel Salimi delivered happy reports from the warfronts. He also brought a number of photographs showing that our fighting forces have been able to overcome difficult obstacles planted by the Saddam regime. It appears that these obstacles had been created with the help of arrogant powers. Despite all this, however, our forces managed to deliver their heavy blows to the Saddam regime. He gave us step-by-step information on the development of events in the war theater and various otherkinds of information other brothers had was discussed. Naturally, the government is now mobilized, as always, to place whatever assistance is necessary at the disposal of the dear fighters at the front. We hope that this phase of the Wal Fajr operation will herald a new opening for us in the war against infidelity and atheism, particularly since this war has been imposed on us. As those in charge have often stated, this war is being prosecuted to vindicate the rights of our nation and country. Obviously, we must constantly note the fact that we did not desire war, nor do we desire it now. This is a war that has been imposed upon us by arrogant powers. Our country and nation are far too proud and mighty to kowtow to arrogant powers. Our nation has inflicted and will inflict what harm is required on the Saddam regime.

This is how we regard the war. The logic behind this war, we think, is easily understood by the deprived nations in the world.

Another topic discussed concerned the country's ports and the ships now waiting at the docks. Our brother, Hadi Nezhad Hoseynian will explain the matter.

We also had a detailed discussion relating to the Voice and Vision, for the first time exploring the way in which the Voice and Vision could serve the country's economic and cultural development, as well as assist the government. I think it was an extremely constructive and creative discussion. We hope the government will be able, more than in the past, to communicate its objectives and aspirations. Undoubtedly, the brothers serving in the Voice and Vision will help in this matter and, God willing, they will communicate to the nation the legitimate policies approved by the Majlis and proposed by the government.

[Question] In light of the session of regional states scheduled to convene in Kuwait today to prevent the spread and leakage of oil and the report we received at the same time about the Iraqi missile attack, could you state the Iranian Government's views on these matters and the decision that will be adopted at that session?

[Answer] As you noted, precisely at the time all these events are in full flow in the region and at the time when all the world's nations are realizing the extent to which Iraq is to blame for hitting the oil wells in the Nowruz field and the extent to which it has acted against the interests of the countries in the region, in an inhuman manner, Iraq committed yet another crime today by attacking another Iranian oil field in the Persian Gulf. This happens despite the fact that, as everyone knows, the adverse economic impact of this action could not possibly be significant in relation to the volume of our oil exports, the extent of our oil reserves within the country and the output of our inshore oil wells. What astonishes us is the extent to which one is prepared to sink, trying to hit yet another oil well and thus to further extend the oil slick while it sees its brothers in the Persian Gulf suffering from a water shortage or a lack of water. Fortunately, this last ditch action has, of course, made little impact. An oil well has been hit, it has caught fire and the fire has gone out, according to reports reaching us so far. I think this should be a warning to all the nations in the region, permitting them to recognize the true face of Saddam's regime in contrast to the ostensibly progressive edifice it is trying to project. In addition to the fact that this is a dependent regime in every sense of the word, it is also a stupid one as well, for, whichever way we try to evaluate the situation, it should, under the present circumstances, try to win the sympathy of the Persian Gulf states.

Supreme Defense Council Discusses War Developments

LD132145 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Text] According to a Central News Unit report, the Supreme Defense council held a session tonight, chaired by Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, president and chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, and attended by Hojjat ol-Eslam Hajj Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, to review the issues concerning the war and the country's defense affairs.

The session, which discussed and reviewed the latest developments concerning the war imposed on Iran by Iraq was attended by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the imam's representative on the Supreme Defense Council; Mir-Hoseyn Musavi, prime minister; Brigadier General Zahirnezhad, chief of Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Colonel Salimi, defense minister; Sham'khani, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps; Hojjat ol-eslam ruhani, the president of the defense commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly; Kharrazi, president of war propaganda headquarters; and several army commanders.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Interview

LD132359 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Interview with Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Khomeyni's representative on the Supreme Defense Council, by unidentified correspondent on 13 April; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Question] Mr Hashemi, would you please tell us what issues were discussed at tonight's session of the Supreme Defense Council?

[Answer] In the Name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. A report was presented during this session on the outcome of the first phase of the Wal Fajr operations and on the Iraqi missile attack on an oil well in the Persian Gulf. Other issues were discussed at the session, including the country's general defense situation.

[Question] What was the outcome of the recent operations in terms of the liberated area, enemy losses, and the number of prisoners captured?

[Answer] The outcome was favorable. There is a sensitive strategic region, the main part of which is in our own territory. There are some strategically important hills in that region; our own oil wells and a small part of the Iraqi territory are also in this region. The oil wells are dug in a common oil field in that region. There is also a post in the Hamrin mountain vicinity which is [word indistinct]. It is generally an important region; the Iraqis intended to keep and stay there forever. Even if we had agreed to future negotiations—against our wishes—the Iraqis would not have returned the region to us so easily. We captured this region.

Of course, we planned this in advance, but we did not want to recapture this region by force, killing the Iraqi troops. We would have preferred to see the Iraqis willingly leave the region, but they did not go. It is a wild (?region); 150 km arein our territory and 30 km are in Iraqi territory. All of it is [word indistinct]. All of it was liberated and a large number of Iraqi forces were killed, particularly after the Iraqi counteroffensives.

The interesting point about this kind of war in these regions is that the two sides may not suffer heavy losses in the first phase. When we launch an offensive, it is natural that we have to make sacrifices because we are trying to break the enemy defense lines and move forward. When we reach the desired point, (?we dig in). The enemy then launches counteroffensives; but since we are firmly stationed in our consolidated positions, we are ready for defense. Then the enemy heavy losses begin.

The enemy suffered heavy losses during his counteroffensives. The interesting point is that the Iraqi forces no longer dare to approach our troops. They can only open long-range artillery fire toward our forces. According to reports we were receiving, it is being said that an Iraqi unit has fire behind it when ordered to attack our forces. That is, if they decide to turn back, they will be killed by their own comrades' fire. Well, when they attack like that, they are rapidly crushed and dispersed because they have no faith. We captured (?a large quantity of arms) during the enemy's counteroffensives yesterday and today. As we said before, we do not intend to stop under any circumstances until we regain our rights.

[Question] Despite the fact that the combatants of Islam have repulsed more than 18 Iraqi counteroffensives, Iraq has claimed that it has halted Iran's advance. What are your comments on this claim?

[Answer] How does Iraq know how far we wanted to advance and how then can it claim that it has halted our advance? Anyway, it is a lie. We have never told our military goals to anyone except our commanders. Therefore, very few individuals know our aims. We have gone as far as we wanted to go, and we will go farther when we decide to do so. It will then become clear whether Iraq has halted our advance.

[Question] Iraq's missile attack on the Nowruz oil field, and recently on the Ardashir oil field, has caused oil leakage and pollution in the Persian Gulf and has brought about shortages for the Persian Gulf shaykhdoms. What is Iraq's aim in this kind of provocations in the region?

[Answer] I don't know about all Iraq's aims. We could find out something through their movements. They probably intended to cause some international noise, to create some noise at the world level. For instance, the war has reached a dangerous region, a vital region has been polluted, to put us under political pressure so that we would be forced to accept a cease-fire. From what they said it was clear that they did not want a cease-fire in that region; they wanted a cease-fire on all fronts. They intended to give the southern Gulf states a pretext to put us under pressure. They probably thought this pollution would damage us more since we have as much coast as all those states. But, fortunately the wind direction, or the natural course of the water, was such that we sustained no damage, only the loss of the oil. We are faced with less danger, but do not think only of ourselves. We made every effort to repair the well; we had some martyrs on the 1st day, but we realized its repair was not possible. We are still sincerely prepared and willing to repair this well as soon as possible. As soon as the region is safe we will quickly make the necessary measures and repair the wells ourselves.

From their actions of last night it was learned that the Iraqis had a deeper plan in mind, that is, it wasn't an accidental job. When they learned that this region was again dangerous for them they thought of using the same lever again and therefore they attacked it again. It seems that they hit a well but our forces quickly managed to extinguish the fire. Fortunately they did not reach their goal. They lost a gunboat and they damaged an oil platform, which we quickly repaired. It is clear that they want to put their own allies under pressure in order to activate them in putting us under pressure, or they probably think of creating an international noise through them. But we have said what we wanted to say and the world has understood us. We have no aim of polluting the waters and it is in our own interest to prevent the pollution and we are ready to do so; it is clear that Iraq is committing an inhumane and ugly act and I think this is one of its mistakes. There might be something behind it; we are waiting to see their aim revealed.

[Question] Alongside the relative silence of Iraqi officials on the recent operations—they do not speak of victory—there is a threat by them that if Iran continues its operations they will carry out air raids against Iranian cities. How do you assess these threats?

[Answer] This is not new. Whenever possible the Iraqis attack our cities, either with missiles, aircraft, or by infiltrating groups of hypocrites and so forth. We are always prepared and our people are prepared; a people who chant the slogan: "War, war until victory," realize that naturally in the course of this war such incidents could happen. Of course if we wanted to retaliate in the same way we could easily do so, because almost the entire eastern urban region of Iraq is within the range of our guns. Iraq has either to use missiles or aircraft, both of which are [word indistinct] and dangerous. We can much more easily pound Iraqi regions, their oil wells and their cities. We do not do that and we are not going to do so, unless we are forced by war circumstances; we are not going to do that for the time being. We are prepared. Of course we will be sad if they repeat such savagery, but our nation must know that it is likely that the Iraqis will do such things, as they have already done. However, their potential is only at the level that they have already shown, that is, they have nothing extra. As long as the war continues, such possibilities exist.

[Question] Could you tell us how and until when the Wal Fajr operations will continue, and along side these operations what aims the Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue?

[Answer] I cannot tell you how; it is one of our secrets, as are where and how far. We have decided on some aims: first, the enemy's withdrawal from our territory; second, reparation of war damage; and third, punishment of the aggressor. Of course, the return of the homeless Iraqis to Iraq is also one of them. If the Iraqis do not surrender and they do not really want to submit themselves to the truth, from the point of view of time I cannot predict any [word indistinct]. I don't know how long it will last. From the point of view of our potential we have again no limitation, that is, we can continue the war as long as we achieve our right. After each operation we hope the enemy and his supporters will take us seriously and will start talks to meet our demands so that the bloodshed and destruction of the war will be stopped and the region given relief. Naturally, such opportunities may be [words indistinct]; it depends on the war policy. After each operation we sit in the Supreme Defense Council and review the war from political, military, and humanitarian points of view and then we decide. Anyhow, we will stop when we achieve our right.

Further on Oil Ministry Statement on Iraqi Attack

LD131315 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran Oil Ministry has issued a statement announcing that following the magnificent victories scored by our antiblasphemy forces during the first phase of the Wal Fajr operations the Zionist Iraqi regime—in revenge of its defeats on the southern fronts and at a time of continuing extensive efforts by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the countries of the region, including the members of the Kuwait convention, aimed at protecting the environment and finding a solution to prevent the pollution of the Persian Gulf and to remove the dangers resulting from the bombing of the Nowruz oil field causing the destruction of millions of marine animals and bringing hardship to the countries in the Persian Gulf region, particularly Qatar and Bahrain, with regard to drinking water—last night the venal Iraqi regime once again subjected the oil installations close to Nowruz within the Iranian continental shelf in the waters of the Persian Gulf to a missile attack.

This latest action by the 'Aflaqi regime is contrary to the conditions and regulations of the Kuwait convention. The Zionist Iraqi regime, as in the past, has trodden underfoot Islamic and humanitarian standards.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Oil Ministry hereby informs the ever-vigilant people of Iran that the primary aim of Iraq's venal dictator is not only to harm our Muslim brothers inhabiting the Persian Gulf but also to prepare the ground for an intervention by the superpowers in the region. May the peace-loving and justice-seeking peoples of the world, particularly our Muslim Arab brothers, increasingly realize the real nature of the Zionist Iraqi regime, inspite of its empty claims of defending the Muslim Arab peoples, God willing.

Foreign Minister Returns From Damascus Visit

GF131747 Tehran IRNA in English 1628 GMT 13 Apr 83

[Text] Tehran, April 13, IRNA—Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati arrived here Wednesday after talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and other Syrian officials including Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam.

Dr. Velayati said his talks in Damascus were fruitful and added that his visit in part was to prevent the implementation of (?conspiracies) against the region such as efforts to vitiate the Palestinian issue through materialisation of the Camp David, Fes and Reagan peace plans.

Asked to comment on the break of talks between King Husayn and the Palestine Liberation Organization, he said the development was a victory for all progressive forces in the region and had been achieved by the diligence of the struggling and progressive Palestinian groups.

During his one-day stop in Damascus, Foreign Minister Velayati also conveyed a letter from President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i to President Hafiz al-Asad.